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REMARKS

By this amendment, independent claims 1, 10, and 23 have been amended, and claims 4, 5, 13, and 14 have been cancelled. Thus, claims 1-3, 6-12 and 15-28 are now pending in the above application. No new matter has been introduced. The claims have been amended to further clarify the claimed subject, and not in view of any prior art.

Claims 1-7 and 10-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U. S. Patent 6,260,029 ("Critelli") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2001/0020228 ("Cantu"). Claims 18-21 and 23-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Critelli in view of Cantu and U.S. Patent No. 5,917,925 to Moore ("Moore"). Claims 18-20 and 23-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Critelli in view of Cantu and U.S. Patent No. 5,504,322 to Pavlidis ("Pavlidis").

Applicants have amended the claims to recite that the bar code includes information relating to a physical characteristic of the envelope. The physical characteristic can be at least one of: (a) the date the security envelope was sealed; (b) the size of the security envelope; and (c) the weight of the security envelope. These limitations were taken from now-canceled claims 4 and 5 (incorporated into claims 1 and 23) and claims 13 and 14 (incorporated into claim 10). The Examiner believes that Critelli teaches physical information pertaining to the date the security envelope was sealed. In support of this belief, the Examiner points to column 2, lines 35-60, of Critelli. This passage reads as follows:

FIG. 1 is a drawing of a sealed mailpiece or sealed package 11 containing thereon a recipient address field 12, a sender address field 13, and a United States Postal Service Information--Based Indicia (IBI) 18. The indicia 18 contains a dollar amount 33, *the date 17 that the postal indicia was affixed to container 11*, the place 34 that container 11 was mailed, the postal security device (meter) serial number 35, the class of mail 15, a FIM code 16 and a 2D encrypted bar code 36. Bar code 36 includes cryptographically secured information that is derived from address field 12 and other information generated or contained in the postal

security device that 15 affixed IBI 18 to the mailpiece 11. The manner in which the IBI 18 and bar code 36 is generated and affixed to mailpiece 11 is known in the art and currently incorporated in several vendor meter products.

The cryptographically secured information contained in bar code 36 includes information that has been digitally signed with the private key of the meter. Upon receipt of the mailpiece 11, the cognizant postal authority can obtain the public key that corresponds to the meters private key in order to verify the authenticity of the cryptographically secured information and correspondingly the authenticity of the IBI indicium 18.

(Emphasis added).

The only "date" mentioned in this passage is the date that postal indicia was affixed to container 11, but this date has nothing to do with the date the envelope was sealed. If the Examiner believes that the container is sealed merely by affixing the postal indicia, that would be wrong because the affixing of indicia 18 does not seal the envelope - it is affixed to the top right portion of the envelope 11 where there is no opening to seal. Moreover, there is nothing in Critelli that states that the sealing of envelope 11 always occurs on the same date as the date indicia is affixed to envelope 11. The envelope can be sealed one day and affixed with indicia 18 on another. Thus, since an envelope can remain unsealed even after indicia 18 is affixed thereto, the date of this affixation has nothing to do at all with the date of sealing envelope 11. Accordingly, since none of the other references relied on by the Examiner overcomes this deficiency in Critelli, withdrawal of the above-referenced rejections is requested.

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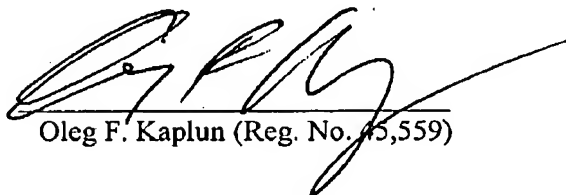
CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner erred in not allowing the pending claims 1-3, 6-12 and 15-28 over the prior art of record. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner's rejections be withdrawn.

Respectfully submitted,

Date:

July 11, 2007



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